DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 425 134 SP 038 210

AUTHOR Tracy, Dyanne M.; Follo, Eric J.; Gibson, Sarah L.; Eckart, Joyce A.

TITLE Success After Failure: A Case Study of Three Teacher Interns.

PUB DATE 1998-00-00
NOTE 41p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; *Academic Failure; Classroom Techniques; Cooperating Teachers; Elementary Education; Higher Education; Preservice Teacher Education; Teacher Certification; Teacher Characteristics; *Teacher Competencies; *Teacher Interns; Teaching Methods; Teaching Skills

ABSTRACT

This case study examines the causes of failure for three teaching interns and the interventions that led to their later success. Data collection included interviews with the three elementary level teacher interns, their cooperating teachers, and their university supervisors. All three teacher interns had encountered numerous and severe difficulties in their initial teaching internships, though during their preservice courses and field experiences, they demonstrated ability, commitment, persistence, and an intense desire to become teachers. All three received second assignments that were successful and that resulted in recommendations for Michigan teacher certification. Findings indicated that four factors contributed to the failure of all three candidates: (1) ineffective teaching methods, (2) detrimental personal characteristics, (3) lack of support from others, and (4) non-congruent expectancies between the cooperating teacher and the intern. For all three interns, there was an interplay of interventions that led to their success. These included support from others (e.g., university supervisors, family, friends, and practitioners); productive personal characteristics; and commitment to the profession. (Contains 18 references.) (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Running head: SUCCESS AFTER FAILURE

ED 425 134

Success After Failure: A Case Study of Three Teacher Interns

Dyanne M. Tracy

Eric J. Follo

Sarah L. Gibson

Oakland University

Joyce A. Eckart

Queens College

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SP038210

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. Tracy

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Abstract

Most teacher interns succeed, yet a few experience failure in their internship. This case study examines the causes of failure for three teaching interns and the interventions that led to their later successes. The transcribed interviews of three intern teachers, their cooperating teachers, and their university supervisors were independently analyzed by the authors. Findings indicate that (a) ineffective teaching methods, (b) detrimental personal characteristics, (c) lack of support from others, and (d) non-congruent expectancies contributed to the failure of all three subjects. Interventions leading to success included: (e) support from others, (f) productive personal characteristics, and (g) commitment to the profession. Conclusions and recommendations are included.

Success After Failure: A Case Study of Three Teacher Interns

Teacher education faculty typically assume that students will succeed in their teaching internships (Knowles & Hoefler, 1989). Yet, our collective knowledge informs us that some students do fail during their teaching internships. What, we wondered, could we learn from their experiences that would stave future intern failures?

We presumed, prior to this investigation, that failure or success was closely tied to the ability of students to transfer and implement the learnings from their content and methods classes to the internship. However, some researchers have concluded that success in student teaching occurs precisely because student teachers do not transfer and implement the learning from their content and methods classes. In fact, Iannaccone (1963) says, "student teaching may be viewed as a period which helps the student teacher modify her behavior from what she was taught in college to what seems to be required on the job" (p. 74). The Holmes Group (1986) even more pointedly assert that "student teachers succeed because they relinquish the norms of professional colleges of education without a struggle... The emphasis is on imitation and subservience to the supervising teacher, not upon investigation, reflection, and solving novel problems" (p.55). However, McNergney and Satterstrom (1984) concluded that "... the ego development of student teachers appears to influence their performances more substantially than other characteristics that have traditionally been considered important in determining teaching success" (p. 23).

Although reasons for intern teacher success have been reported, few studies have explored the determinants of failure. Ronk and Schwille (1993) "found only a few references about the unsuccessful, or marginal teaching

experience" (p. 1). Nevertheless, some researchers offer rationales that explain the failures which sometimes occur in student teachers' experiences.

Fuller and Bown (1975, pp. 37-38) identified three areas of concern from which failure may emanate:

> 1. Survival concerns--These are concerns about one's adequacy and survival as a teacher, about class control, about being liked by pupils, about supervisors' opinions, about being observed, evaluated, praised, and failed... about feelings [that] seem to be evoked by one's status as a student.
>
> 2. Teaching situation concerns--These are concerns about having to work with too many students or having too many noninstructional duties, about time pressures, about inflexibility, lack of instructional materials, and so on...
>
> 3. Pupil concerns--These are concerns about recognizing the social and emotional needs of students, about the inappropriateness of some curriculum material for certain students, about being fair to pupils, about tailoring content to individual students and so on...

Smith and Sanche (1993) based their consideration of teacher intern concerns on the Fuller and Bown study and added their own area of concern that they called the "out of school" concern because it centered in the intern's personal and family relationships.

Rickman and Hollowell (1981, p. 177), in a survey of cooperating teachers and university supervisors, discovered five specific factors to which they attributed failure: (a) problems with classroom management and discipline, (b) inability to relate well with students, (c) ineffective teaching methods, (d) lack of commitment to the profession, and (e) personal characteristics. They found that any combination of these five factors may

contribute to the failure of interns. In other words, interns often fail because they perceive themselves to be powerless to improve their instructional strategies, classroom management and interaction skills even when they receive specific, corrective feedback. Yet, Olszewski, Hoffbauer, and Borchardt (1991) found that:

> Where students have some control over their program, where they are provided quality field experiences, where supportive and informed supervision is provided, and where there is evident and consistent concern and helpfulness from the staff, there is every likelihood of preparing successful and competent teachers. (p. 8)

This is consistent with Mayo and Padro´n's (1993) finding based on self-reports from student interns that they, the interns, judged support from cooperating teachers to be "very helpful" or "extremely helpful."

Since by the time students reach the internship both the student and the institution have made a significant investment of time and resources, the institution usually provides additional support in an effort to reverse the failure (Rickman & Hollowell, 1981, p. 176). In Michigan, for those teacher interns who fail, "the norm seems to be one repetition [of the internship]" (Directors and Representatives of Teacher Education Programs (DARTEP), 1995). Michigan institutions with teacher education programs frequently require a written plan as a means of support for students who enroll in a second internship (DARTEP, 1995). A second opportunity may include not only different classroom contexts, but may also require personal counseling, remedial assistance in teaching methods and peer support so that the intern begins to develop a sense of efficacy. However, there is no standardized plan which interns can use as a model. Given the myriad theories of failure and

success we decided to ascertain what would constitute an effective intervention plan.

The purposes of this case study were to identify and examine: (a) the causes for the initial failure of three intern teachers, and (b) the intervention factors that contributed to their eventual success. Specifically, two questions were of major importance:

1. Why were these interns, who had successfully completed all of the requirements admitting them into the capstone experience of the teaching internship, experiencing failure? and

2. What interventions facilitated their transition from internship failure to teaching success? This latter question is related to one that Fuller and Bown (1975) considered worth asking over 20 years ago. "What kinds of interventions by what kinds of interveners in what contexts elicit what responses from which subjects?" (p. 26).

Other salient questions that emerged during our study were:

1. What were the commonalties among the journeys of these three subjects through their internships?

2. What inferences, if any, from these commonalties can be extruded? and

3. What implications for modifying our institution's teacher education program are suggested by these inferences?

Definition Of Terms

Intern Teaching Success. There are four facets to this variable of success: (a) Receiving a grade at or above the acceptable level to be recommended for a Michigan Teacher Certificate, (b) Earning a grade that satisfies the intern's expectations, (c) Procuring positive letters of

recommendation from the cooperating teacher and university supervisor, and (d) Experiencing intrinsic satisfaction and confidence as a teacher.

Intern Teaching Failure. There are four degrees of failure: (a) Receiving a grade below the acceptable level to be recommended for a Michigan Teacher Certificate; (b) Earning a grade that qualifies for certification, but is below the intern's aspiration, (c) Not receiving supportive letters of recommendation, and (d) Having a personal sense of inadequacy and ineffectiveness as a teacher.

Methods

Subjects

The three subjects selected were undergraduate, elementary education students attending a midsized, midwestern, state university who had encountered numerous and severe difficulties in their initial teaching internships. If they had continued, these internships would have resulted in a grade below the level acceptable for recommendation of a Michigan Teacher Certificate. During their preservice courses and field experiences these students had demonstrated ability, commitment, persistence, and an intense desire to become teachers. All three of the subjects received second assignments that were successful and that resulted in recommendations for Michigan Teacher Certification, and positive recommendations for placement as classroom teachers

All three subjects were females, ranging in age from 22 to 27 years. One was an African-American; the other two were Caucasian, one of whom was a second-generation Italian-American. The African-American subject lived and worked on campus. The Italian-American subject lived at home with her mother, grandmother and other siblings and held a part-time job. The third subject lived with her husband and infant son off campus. This son

was a premature, low birth weight infant, born a few weeks before she began her first internship.

Procedures

The study began when the first author became curious about the rapid successes that three interns experienced in their second intern placements after having had serious difficulties in their initial internships. An informal group-interview with these interns was held by the first author who considered them to be possible subjects for a case study. During this informal interview, the discussion focused on the similarities in the assignments in which they had experienced failure and on the assignments in which they had recently succeeded.

The first author discussed her discoveries from the informal interview with the second and third authors of this study. They, too, were intrigued by the similarities of the interns' experiences, especially the emphatic statements that each intern made about "praying a lot!" The authors wondered if there were other commonalties among these interns that could be identified and that would be helpful in ensuring success for future intern teachers. Further, they speculated that patterns might emerge that could lead to changes in the teacher education program and in the methods used by university supervisors. After this discussion the authors determined that the best approach for this investigation would be the case study method of research. At this point the fourth author was invited to participate in the case study because of her prior involvement with the subjects.

A schedule of questions was developed to gather data from the three interns, their first and second cooperating teachers, as well as their first and second university supervisors. Only one of the subject, a cooperating teacher, declined to participate in the study. This schedule was modified slightly, but

not substantively, to accommodate the varying roles of the subjects and the conditions of failure or success (see Appendix A). The schedule of questions was closely followed to provide controls for comparisons and data analyses. Audio recordings were made of each interview and verbatim transcripts were prepared from all audio tapes.

Each of the four authors independently analyzed all of the interview transcripts. The analyses consisted of identifying the factors contributing to the failures, identifying the interventions leading to successes, and identifying the markers of success for each intern. Initially Rickman and Hollowell's (1981) five typologies (a-e, see above) were the factors used in this study. However, as the analyses progressed five additional factors that contributed to failure emerged: (a) incompatibility with cooperating teachers' teaching styles, (b) lack of support from others, (c) not meeting program requirements, (d) ineffective modeling by cooperating teachers, and (e) noncongruent expectancies between interns and cooperating teachers or university supervisors.

After completing independent analyses of the transcripts the authors met to compare their findings. In group meetings each incident of failure was discussed by the four authors until consensus was reached on its designation to one of the factors, (a-g). This information was recorded in chart form for ease of data retrieval and further analyses. The five factors identified in the review of the literature (Rickman and Hollowell, 1981) and the five factors that emerged from this case study were placed in matrices for analysis.

The matrices were analyzed to answer a fundamental question posed in this case study:

1) Why were these interns, who had successfully completed all of the requirements admitting them into the capstone experience of teaching internship, experiencing failure?
2) What interventions facilitated a transition from internship failure to success?

Findings

Commonalties of Failure

Four factors contributing to failure were common to all three interns: (a) ineffective teaching methods, (b) detrimental personal characteristics, (c) lack of support from others, and (d) non-congruent expectancies. These factors were idenditied by the interns, their cooperating teachers and their university supervisors. While these four factors were common to all three interns, the factors impacted the interns with varying levels of influence.

For April ineffective teaching methods, was by far the leading factor contributing to her failure. This was less so for Diana and Sharon, even though it was still important. In Sharon's case her detrimental personal characteristics, inhibited her success. For Diana ineffective teaching methods, and detrimental personal characteristics, contributed equally to her failure. All three interns identified lack of support from others as contributing to their failure. However, lack of support from others, was not corroborated by their cooperarting teachers or their university supervisors.

Both April and her first cooperating teacher recognized the importance of ineffecctive classroom management, detrimental personal characteristics, and not meeting program goals as contributing to April's failure. However, in Sharon's case, only her first cooperating teacher and first university supervisor agreed that detrimental personal characteristics, including poor grammar, was important in contributing to her failure. Only Diana's first

cooperating teacher identified detrimental personal characteristics as important. Two of the interns, Sharon and April, recognized non-congruent expectancies as a contributor to their failure. Diana identified non-congruent expectancies to a lesser degree.

Discussion

Commonalties of Failure

While each of the interns had unique experiences, four of the ten factors were more frequently identified as contributing to failure in their first experiences. The two leading factors common to at least two of the subjects were detrimental personal characteristics and non-congruent expectancies. Two other factors leading to failure were ineffective teaching methods and lack of support from others.

Detrimental personal characteristics. For the three interns, their detrimental personal characteristics ranged from use of poor grammar, to timidity and fearfulness, to an authoritarian disposition, to simply being completely overwhelmed.

April found the demands of her first internship insurmountable. In her words, "I was drowning. What really stands out in my mind is that I was overwhelmed." April was overwhelmed by a number of teaching demands: discipline, planning, relating to children, using student feedback, and understanding curriculum goals and objectives. Fuller and Bown (1975) identified these areas of concern from which failure emanated. Her personal characteristics became so detrimental that they affected her physical and mental health, as well as her teaching. After numerous attempts by the cooperating teacher, the university supervisor and the principal, to help her remediate her weaknesses, April was told that she was not succeeding. Her response to the prospect of failing was, "I lost my appetite for the week. I

was very stressed. My body was just shaking and [I] must have lost five pounds in three days. I would say that next to my dad's death, this was the worst experience of my life."

Diana's first internship was impacted by her authoritarian belief that she alone should control the students when she taught. She seemed to be waiting for "her turn" to teach, all the while, unaware that her cooperating teacher was deliberately modeling several teaching and communication strategies that best fit the needs of the students in the class. Diana's first cooperating teacher related that Diana "was real hesitant at first" and "was comfortable sitting back and watching." Around the third week, the cooperating teacher felt it necessary to force Diana to begin teaching even though she believed Diana "wasn't ready." The cooperating teacher continued, "It kind of seemed like it was okay at first, then the kids gradually lost respect for her. If she wasn't prepared for something, the kids would be completely off." Apparently, Diana felt that her positional status as a teacher would establish her as the authority in the classroom, guaranteeing her the respect of the students.

Sharon's first internship was characterized by timidity, and fearfulness complicated by her personal domestic stress. Sharon had recently given birth to a premature baby which affected her physical and emotional stamina. Her cooperating teacher described Sharon's first weeks as an intern, "Her progress was slow and with every failure, she became a bit more timid. Failure in every area of life... Fear built up; I counseled a lot. She seemed upset about things, one more failure in her life." These observations were corroborated by her university supervisor, who said, "When children acted out she just looked scared and did not know what to do. Her work load was

overwhelming. Home problems were overwhelming, keeping preparation from being accomplished."

Non-congruent expectancies. April entered her internship expecting that she would receive a lot of support from her cooperating teacher in classroom management, lesson planning and materials. However, her cooperating teacher expected that April would be self-sufficient in these areas because of her outstanding grade point average in her course work and the evidence of positive experiences in her earlier field placements. April reflected, "...we didn't discuss discipline which I wish we would have. The biggest problem we had was using... was I allowed to use her materials or [was I supposed to] get everything on my own?"

The cooperating teacher complained:

> This is the final thing that blew me out of the water and I am sure that I am embarrassed to share this with you. I told her to prepare a lesson, a unit on Indians. She had it all done and all taught in a week. I said you have several weeks, you know. I want you to really develop, take one thing at a time and take it through the procedure.

The cooperating teacher had one vision of an effective unit and April had another. This incident was indicative of many others in which April and her cooperating teacher had disparate expectations. Not only were the expectations disparate, but they were unable to express and discuss these differences. Thus, they had no opportunities to find common points of agreement.

Diana's first cooperating teacher held expectations for student teachers based on previous experiences with field-placement students. "The girl [field-placement student] I had before [prior to Diana] just came in and started doing things and she did more work and so I thought that is what

student teaching is." This cooperating teacher had never been assigned a student teacher prior to Diana. Even so, the cooperating teacher noted, "It hadn't been that long since I student taught, so I remembered and I knew that things were not going the way they should. So, I was very concerned." Diana failed to reach her cooperating teacher's expectancies from the very beginning. Further, Diana's cooperating teacher was unable to adjust her expectancies to work effectively with Diana.

Sharon was not able to demonstrate certain skills that were usually associated with and expected of beginning student teachers by her cooperating teacher and her university supervisor. The cooperating teacher reported, "Sharon couldn't do it all at once, couldn't put it together." Further, "Sharon read a story, these were 'field experience student things.' I have worked with them."

In an effort to identify specific teaching behaviors that needed to be strengthened, Sharon and her cooperating teacher each videotaped a lesson. Sharon said:

> I tried to compare the videos and the way the children acted and responded to me and the way the children responded to you [cooperating teacher]. So it was just really interesting that the kids, they still would be rocking back on the chairs when she [cooperating teacher] was talking... they [cooperating teacher and university supervisor] kind of marked me down because the child was doing that. But while she [cooperating teacher] was doing it, it was, it just went unnoticed.

Here, Sharon focused on the behavior of one student rather than on the complexity of the teaching skills modeled by the cooperating teacher. In

addition, she eschewed any further discussion of skill improvement by becoming defensive.

Sharon's failure in her initial internship can be attributed to an interplay of factors, many of which, were beyond her control. Sharon's cooperating teacher held expectations that Sharon was unable to meet and that the cooperating teacher was unable to clearly communicate. Sharon experienced personal problems at home that were overpowering and intruded into her professional day. She was unable to completely understand or remediate deficiencies when they were described to her. Any one of these factors could have resulted in a failed internship but the combination of these factors proved to be insurmountable for Sharon.

Ineffective teaching methods. All three subjects, in varying degrees, displayed ineffective teaching methods. April's teaching was ineffective for multiple reasons: (a) ineffective preparation, (b) poor pacing of lessons, and (c) use of inappropriate lesson delivery for the cognitive and developmental level of the students. April appeared to be more concerned with her teaching actions than with her students' learning, as Fuller and Bown (1975) found in their research. Her cooperating teacher explained:

> ...she was totally clueless, what her role was, what her expectations were [what was expected of her], how to make a lesson plan; she had no control of the class, just was totally clueless. ...she had them listening for an hour and twenty minutes. She had them sitting on the floor for an hour and twenty minutes. And you know, they were just second graders. ...when she got up in front of the kids, she just started talking and talking and talking. She lost them. She wasn't looking for feedback. She was just talking as if they were older kids.

All of these attempts at teaching reflected April's inability to perform effectively in the classroom as a teacher. This was so contrary to her academic performance at the university that it shocked her former professors and plunged April into a state of total despair and confusion. April lamented, "...I just didn't know what to do."

A web of factors accounted for Diana's failing performance, as well. Her teaching methods were ineffective because of: (a) lack of preparation, (b) laggard lesson pacing, (c) cognitively inappropriate content and communication, and (d) inability to keep students on task and actively engaged. Diana's first cooperating teacher stated, "When I said she 'wasn't prepared,' that only happened like once or twice where she was writing her lesson plans in the morning before she was to teach. Anybody who is used to teaching can do that, but a student teacher?" Diana's first university supervisor recalled the difficulties, "Class control. Class control. There wasn't any and <u>really</u> boring, all lecture-types of lessons." Her lack of class control was partly the result of her <u>expectation</u> that just being the teacher conferred upon her <u>automatic</u> classroom control. Therefore, she had developed no strategies for managing, or helping children manage, their behaviors.

On the other hand, there were two predominant reasons for Sharon's ineffective teaching: (a) inappropriate communication for the cognitive level of students, and (b) inability to manage multiple tasks concurrently. Her first cooperating teacher complained, "She would lose children. She wasn't at the language level of first-grade kids. Sharon couldn't do it all at once, couldn't put it together." These two deficiencies inhibited her progress in other areas.

<u>Lack of support from others.</u> Sharon and April indicated that lack of support was one of the factors that caused them to be unsuccessful. Conversely, Diana she did not recognize lack of support as a contributing

factor, but was apparent to the university supervisor that the cooperating teacher had not offered meaningful support to Diana.

April perceived her cooperating teacher to be unable and unwilling to give the requisite support, but she charged that the university supervisor was able, but unwilling to give the needed support. When asked about the support from her cooperating teacher, April replied:

> I think it is because she might have been new. There should have, I wish there would have been something to help her or some way to help her. I know your cooperating teacher isn't supposed to ... oh, you're always right and your cooperating teacher is wrong, but I thought they were supposed to be a bit more supportive... Maybe not so much saying, 'it's your fault,' but actually sitting down and discussing.

Later, April recounted, "I wish I would have gotten more support from the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher. It just seemed like they were ganging up on me... ."

Both the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor believed otherwise. April's cooperating teacher described her support, "I tried and she would come to my house and we would talk about it and we would be at school until 5:30 or 6:00 with her asking me what I should do... . You know she wanted me to tell her every single step. When I would say, 'Just think about it, how are you going to do this? April's university supervisor told us, "I sat down at several conferences with April and the teacher, April by herself, April and the principal [and] tried to give her some suggestions. So there was a lot of input... you know a lot of suggestions from various people to try and help April." In this case the cooperating teacher and university supervisor blamed April for her own failure rather than determining how to

help her. The cooperating teacher was unable to identify specific deficiencies in order to assist April in remediating them.

Sharon, like April, perceived that neither her cooperating teacher nor her university supervisor had given her the support that she needed. Sharon understood that her cooperating teacher wanted to help her but lacked the skills to do so. The cooperating teacher had even had Sharon's teaching performance videotaped, but she lacked the analytical skills to help Sharon recognize specific areas in which she needed to improve. Sharon described it this way:

> She videotaped me and I videotaped her and we tried to watch, you know, see the difference. To me, there really wasn't that big of a difference, but to the supervising teacher and the cooperating teacher there seemed to be a big difference.

Further, Sharon felt that the university supervisor was trying to counsel her out of teaching. Sharon insisted, "I was told [by the university supervisor] that my next placement was not going to be easier. It was going to be harder, in fact."

Although Diana did not perceive that there was a lack of support, her cooperating teacher questioned whether her own lack of experience as a classroom and a cooperating teacher may have resulted in a lack of real support for Diana. Diana was the first teacher intern this cooperating teacher had had, and the cooperating teacher was unsure of the procedures and resources available to her to support Diana. The cooperating teacher admitted that she was very concerned about Diana and wanted her to succeed. However, she acknowledged:

> I really didn't feel comfortable calling you [university supervisor] the first or second week because I thought things would get better and I

> didn't want her to get in trouble or you [university supervisor] thinking that she is having problems when she is not. But then I kind of secretly called you [university supervisor] without telling her. ... I talked to those used to having student teachers and that is where I got the idea to leave the room... . So that's where that stuff came from.

Diana thought she was getting the support she need, but the cooperating teacher was unable to give it.

Summary

The failure of the three teacher interns was attributed to: (a) detrimental personal characteristics, (b) non-congruent expectancies, (c) ineffective teaching methods, and (d) lack of support from others. Ineffective teaching methods and detrimental personal characteristics are factors also identified by Rickman and Hollowell (1981) as contributing to failure. More recently the findings of Mayo and Padro´n (1993) and Olszewski, Hoffbauer, and Borchardt (1991) upheld lack of support from others as an important factor contributing to the failure or success of teacher interns. They conclude that the support of informed supervisors, cooperating teachers and helpful staff increased the likelihood of success for teacher interns. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of this study that when support is not present the probability of failure increases.

While lack of support from others, ineffective teaching methods and detrimental personal characteristics have been reported in the literature, non-congruent expectancies emerged from the data in this study. The Holmes Group implied that congruent expectancies are important to the relationship between cooperating teachers and teacher interns when it declared that to be successful interns must relinquish their own and the university's expectations. This contention suggests that there needs to be an alignment of

expectancies among the three vested parties to ensure integrity of the program and success of the intern. It appears that to ensure congruent expectancies the university needs to take the lead in developing a program in which university supervisors and cooperating teachers develop a common set of expectations.

Findings

Commonalties of Interventions

We found the following factors of intervention leading to success common to all three subjects: (a) support from others, (b) productive personal characteristics, and (c) commitment to the profession. Support from others was the most frequently mentioned intervention for all three subjects. Remember, support from others emerged from this study as an important factor and was not mentioned by Rickman and Hollowell (1981).

Discussion

Commonalities of Intervention

Support from others. April identified this factor most frequently as an intervention contributing to her success. Both the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher corroborated this. Support came in several forms.

Once April departed from her first internship, she contacted a former professor, the fourth author of this study, for support. The professor and April discussed April's perception of her problems. As a first step in remediating the problem, this professor reviewed with April the process of writing lesson plans. Together they developed procedures as explained in the textbook that was used in the course April had taken with this professor in the previous year. Next, they reexamined appropriate classroom management strategies, applying them to some of the discipline problems April had experienced in her first internship. This professor helped April

return to basic teaching skills to support her in preparation for her second internship. As they worked together, April began to express an understanding of the reasons for her initial failure and to gather strength.

It was then decided that the next appropriate step for April would be to utilize her strength in mathematics to develop her teaching abilities. April then met with another of her former professors, the first author of this study, for further support. They co-developed and co-taught a mathematics lesson to three separate groups of nine third-grade students. The professor was the lead teacher in teaching the first group of students. Immediately after the lesson, April and the professor spent five minutes debriefing the lesson. April became the lead teacher for the second and third lessons. During the debriefing, following the third lesson, April expressed and displayed renewed confidence. April and the professor designed and taught a language arts lesson incorporating hand puppets the following week. This lesson was such a success that April was exuberant about beginning a new internship. At this point, she believed that she was prepared and would be successful. In reflecting on these three weeks, April said, "I wonder what you [first and fourth authors] must have thought when you heard that I was drowning. But just to have you stick up for and help me was the biggest gift I could have gotten."

Another of April's former professors telephoned a local school principal to arrange a second internship. The principal believed he had a fourth/fifth-grade teacher who would consider the request made by the professor. Later, the professor made arrangements with the teacher, explaining that he knew that April could very likely succeed with the teacher's step-by-step guidance and reassurance.

April was also supported by her second university supervisor. When interviewed, the second university supervisor recalled,

> What I did was encourage her [April] and that seemed to mean a lot to her. I guess I'd have to go to the very first lesson plan and evaluation that I gave her. You could sense throughout the entire lesson that she was very nervous. And I took all of that into consideration knowing that this was the second time for her. And so I gave her a very positive evaluation. Reassuring her that she was organized and that her lesson plan was good. And that basically she just needed some classroom experience and that, in time, it would come. And she broke down and cried and she gave me this big hug and said, "You don't know what your words mean to me."

The time between internships lasted five weeks, from Thanksgiving break to January 4. The holiday breaks allowed time for a reasonably smooth transition for April. In this interim, family, friends, and religion also proved to be important facets in April's support system. April told us:

> They would say, "I know you can do this." And they kept repeating these words. My aunt and cousins were also very supportive... My mom gave me a St. Anthony medallion, which I still wear. Because she is very religious [she said to me], "We believe St. Anthony will get you through this." It was a culmination of family, friends, and the two of you [first and fourth authors]. If it wasn't for these people, I wouldn't have made it through... I would have never gotten through without everybody.

Support from others was most frequently identified as an intervention contributing to Sharon's success. She recalled the support given by her mother. "She told me... 'Sharon, you've always wanted to be a teacher in high

school. You took all those classes, Child Development, you're good with children. Don't let what other people say [dissuade you]; maybe they're wrong.' And I just had to start thinking that they [those associated with the first internship] were wrong and that I was right."

The time between Sharon's internships lasted five months, from Spring break to late August in the same calendar year. This extended break allowed her to modify some of the familial conditions that affected her initial internship failure. During the time between the first and second internship a friend of Sharon's told her, "You've always wanted to go into teaching and I wanted to go into business and I'm a third-grade teacher now. You know that it's what you should be doing and just try again."

Finally, during the second internship, Sharon summed up the support she received, "I felt that my supervising teacher and university supervisor were there for me; they weren't against me being a teacher." When asked what the most critical factors were in helping her to succeed, Sharon replied, "I would say the support from the people you work with. Support from the other student teachers I worked with. Support from the university supervisor, cooperating teacher, your principal. When the principal comes in the room and tells you you're doing fantastic and sits down there and listens to your lesson, I mean that makes you feel good." Sharon was now in a more supportive environment.

Support from others was identified as an intervention contributing to Diana's success. Like the other two interns, Diana received support from a variety of sources. In reflecting on the first internship, Diana stated, "I received support from all peers, especially from one who did the same thing [Sharon had failed her first internship seven months prior to their

conversation]... The cooperating teacher suggested ideas, what rules have the most effect and to stick to them, be consistent... "

The time between Diana's internships only lasted three-and-a-half days, from a Thursday noon to a Monday morning. During the time between the first and second internship Diana was contacted by her second university supervisor. Diana recounted, "It helped to know that someone from the university talked to me and that OU's [Oakland University] priority wasn't the grade, but me." Diana also sought spiritual support from another teacher in the building. "...[the other teacher] encouraged me spiritually. She was there through thick and thin. She told me to let everything out and pray about it; she was very straight forward."

In Diana's second internship she described the support by peers, her cooperating teacher, principal, and university supervisor in this way:

> From peers, very little, but they were busy and it was hard for them to relate. The cooperating teacher took time to talk now and then. Her feedback was good. She noticed some new methods of teaching that I was doing. [The cooperating teacher] wanted to become spiritual too. The principal was encouraging. He complimented me after class on management. He saw me in charge. [The second university supervisor] encouraged and strengthened class management and instruction.

Diana was receiving the recognition and support that she needed, and she was also given specific classrrom management techniques that matched her teaching style.

Productive personal characteristics. This factor was also identified as an important intervention contributing to the success of all three subjects. This factor has previously been reported in the literature (Rickman and Hollowell,1981).

Between April's internships, after conferencing with two professors, she began to understand that she could affect the outcome of a situation through her own initiative. Then, when she successfully co-taught third graders with feedback, April understood that being proactive gave her the proper mind set to accept the assistance she needed to succeed in the second internship.

In her second internship, the university supervisor offered April positive reinforcement and reassured her that she was succeeding. After an observation, the university supervisor reminded April, "'Now see, April? That went a lot smoother today and that's because you had much more confidence in what you were doing.' So I constantly reassured her that she was getting better and better. And she really was." April's growth in initiative and self-confidence were productive personal characteristics that contributed to her success in her second internship. April's second cooperating teacher simply stated, "She started to believe in herself."

Sharon's productive personal charasteristics, positive attitude and determination, assisted her throughout her second internship. Sharon explained, "... I didn't take the comments [feedback from the cooperating teacher and university supervisor] as negative[s]." Sharon's second cooperating teacher described an incident in which Sharon misunderstood directions, "She [Sharon] wasn't mad. She wasn't discouraged." The cooperating teacher went on to say that later they both laughed about it, which implies that Sharon was more able to accept directions and corrections this time. The second university supervisor also recalled that Sharon "... even went into it [entered the second internship] with a positive attitude,... trying not to set up all those around her to discover [her previous] failure." Neither the university supervisor nor Sharon had informed the cooperating teacher

that she failed in her first internship. These comments exemplify the way in which Sharon's positive attitude and determination contributed to her succes in her second internship.

Although Diana expressed a sense of self confidence in her first internship, it was more bravado than confidence. By the second internship, in a new context, with a teacher whose teaching style was more compatible to Diana's, her self confidence became more authentic. She declared, "The principal said I was very successful. The cooperating teacher never directly told me, but through little things she did... It made me feel so much better. Finally, I realized and everyone else did, that I could accomplish this." Confidence in herself was a notable productive personal characteristic in Diana's case.

Commitment to the profession. This factor was an important intervention leading to success, but not cited as frequently as support from others, and productive personal characteristics. Commitment to the profession was previously reported in the literature (Rickman and Hollowell, 1981). All three interns demonstrated commitment to the profession in various ways.

During April's second internship, her cooperating teacher said, "She didn't sit for the first week or two... She wanted to get in... I didn't push her. She very much took on the responsibility. She was self-motivated." This self-initiated behavior was an indication of April's commitment to the profession.

Diana's commitment to the profession was evident during the time between her first and second internships. She noted, "I took time on the weekend to reflect on how vital to me this profession was." Her second university supervisor summed up Diana's commitment to the profession this way, "... she was really determined and this really seemed to be pretty much

a life-long goal of hers and of her family. She was willing to keep at it until she had success."

Sharon's commitment to the profession was evidenced by her expressed enthusiasm. This was supported by her cooperating teacher's observations of her conscientiousness. Sharon, herself, said that even from the first day of her second internship, she was excited, " I wanted [Sharon's emphasis] to work with these kids." Her cooperating teacher added, "[Sharon] was very conscientious of her lesson plans..."

Summary

The interventions leading to success included: (a) support from others, (b) productive personal characteristics, and (c) commitment to the profession. All three interns persisted in reaching their goal of becoming a teacher, despite the devastating specter of professional failure and the traumatic blow to their egos. This substantiates their productive personal characteristics and commitment to the profession. Pigge and Marso (1989) found that interns became "more assured about their decision to become teachers" as they progressed through their teacher training (p. 9). The data from this study suggest that commitment to the profession sustained these interns and motivated them to accept and complete a second internship. Commitment to the profession and productive personal characteristics are intrapersonal while support from others, the factor that emerged from this study, is interpersonal. The interactive effect of the three factors, from within and outside the interns, created the synergy that led to success.

Conclusions And Implications

April

The first cooperating teacher for April was an experienced teacher of second-grade pupils, but she was unable to analyze the teaching act into

discrete elements of effectiveness. Therefore, she could not help April bridge the gap from theory to practice. When April failed to effectively teach elementary pupils the cooperating teacher was unable to assist her. The inability of April to teach the second graders and the cooperating teacher's inability to coach April proved to be disastrous for all.

April was overwhelmed throughout her first internship. She had always been successful in school and had experienced immediate success in her early field placements. Thus, when April found herself in a school environment in which she was not successful, she was almost totally unable to function. She was incapable of processing even the most gentle constructive criticism given to her by anyone at her school. If April had not been removed from this environment and offered another placement where she could begin anew, she probably would not have been able to regain a sense of worthiness and experience success.

A combination of intervening factors provided for April's success. Reassured and motivated by a series of successful teaching vignettes under the guidance of the first author, emotional and spiritual support from her friends and family, April moved into a new environment. The cooperating teacher and university supervisor received her without prejudice. Working in partnership with the cooperating teacher as a co-teacher in a fourth-fifth-grade split provided April with support and a teaching environment in which she could succeed. April took advantage of the new opportunity and was so successful that the second cooperating teacher could hardly believe she had had problems in a previous setting.

Diana

In Diana's first experience, the fourth-grade classroom included many students who consistently challenged even the cooperating teacher. Since the

cooperating teacher and the students had already reached a high level of frustration with each other, the climate was not conducive to success for a novice teacher with poor teaching skills. The situation was further exacerbated by Diana's expectation that her position as teacher would automatically command the utmost respect. And, even when the cooperating teacher tried to model for Diana an effective lesson, Diana was unable to discern the attributes of its effectiveness. Thus the students, perceiving Diana's lack of teaching and management skills, along with her rigid demeanor, behaved in an even more antagonistic manner, treating her as a helpless neophyte. This milieu lead to Diana's failure. The more the students resisted, the more she tried to exert her authority. Her authoritarian attitude, therefore, defeated her effort to either teach or win the respect of the students.

Because Diana believed that her position as teacher would automatically guarantee her success, she was often insufficiently prepared to teach. She did not win the students' attention, as she falsely expected; consequently, she failed. Only after Diana was repeatedly reminded by her cooperating teacher and university supervisor that a teacher intern has very little positional status in the eyes of impertinent fourth graders, did she begin to change her teaching behavior. But, by then it was too late.

Diana had only a three-day transition period before beginning her second placement in the same school. Because of this, she had extensive exiting discussions with her cooperating teacher, principal, and university supervisor. During these discussions she was encouraged to reflect on the experiences and on the detailed observation notes from her first placement. Additionally Diana talked with other teachers in the school and received significant emotional and spiritual support from two teachers and her family.

Staying in the same school and continuing to work with the same university supervisor, Diana was placed in a split-classroom where she and the cooperating teacher took advantage of this structure by co-teaching the grades separately for the first few weeks. Working with smaller groups on a equal basis with the cooperating teacher provided Diana with the opportunity and support that she needed to succeed.

Sharon

Sharon's first cooperating teacher was a successful first-grade teacher who modeled effective teaching skills. Yet, Sharon was unable to determine the instructional elements that contributed to the cooperating teacher's success. In addition, Sharon could not relate what she was seeing to the principles of learning she had been taught in her university courses, nor could she transfer them into her own teaching practice. These inabilities, coupled with her domestic strife, induced in Sharon an overwhelming sense of timidity and unpreparedness. Her lack of confidence was further confounded when she attempted to teach the whole class. Whereas she was able to focus on and meet the needs of a few students at one time, she was never able to gain a sense of the dynamics of the whole class.

Sharon exhibited a positive attitude and a determination to succeed throughout both internships. When her first unsuccessful internship was officially terminated, she continued reporting to the classroom to work with small groups of children, knowing that this would contribute to her eventual success. During her transition period from the first internship to the second, Sharon received emotional support from her mother and a close friend. Her reflection led her to the conclusion that her long-time commitment to the profession was indeed attainable. Thus she entered her second internship with a steadfast resolve to succeed.

Conclusions

To recapitulate, no single factor can be identified as solely responsible for failure or for intervention leading to success. In each case there was an interplay of factors leading to failure and to success. For failure, non-congruent expectancies between the cooperating teacher and the intern teacher exacerbated perceptions of ineffective teaching methods. In the first internship all three interns were concerned with their "adequacy and survival as a teacher, about class control . . . about being observed, evaluated, praised, and failed" (Fuller & Brown, 1975, pp. 37-38). April's failure was due, in part, to additional concerns "about having to work with too many students and having too many non-instructional duties, about time pressures" (p. 38). What she needed to succeed was intervention from a professional who could provide her with specific guidelines for managing the students, materials and instruction. In Diana's case, she needed help in relationships with children. In the first internship, Diana and her cooperating teacher had different expectancies relevant to managing children. The cooperating teacher expected children would manage themselves if they were assigned a task whereas Diana expected that she would manage them through completion of the task. They were unable to align their perceptions of the locus of control of the children's behavior. Therefore their expectancies for classroom management were not in alignment. Sharon's difficulties in her first internship were compounded by what Smith & Sanche (1993) labeled out of school concerns.

For all three interns there was also an interplay of interventions that led to their successes. For example, support from the university supervisors may not have been sufficient without support from friends, family and practitioners. Similarly, merely changing the internship settings probably

would not have led to success without other factors intervening. While the change of context cannot be denied as vital to the success of these interns, it in itself was not a factor. It simply provided an opportunity for the interventions that led to the success of the interns. Undoubtedly each intern would have remained a failure in the second placement had not the interventions identified in this study occurred. In other words what really made the difference were the people in the context. There was a better match between each intern and her cooperating teacher.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this case study of three teacher interns who initially failed, then succeeded, it is apparent that some changes in the way in which teacher interns are assigned, guided and mentored through their internships are warranted. After careful analyses of the data, the following recommendations emanate:

1. The teacher education faculty must take a proactive role in the selection of training sites and the placement of teacher interns with specific teachers within these sites. It is clear that compatibility of teaching styles of the intern and cooperating teacher, and of their perceptions of the teaching-learning relationship, is an important factor for the success of the teacher intern.

Because there are a variety of effective teaching and learning styles, a favorable match could be accomplished through the use of one or more of the following: (a) a field placement with the possible cooperating teacher prior to the teaching internship assignment, (b) "Get Acquainted Activities" among the identified group of cooperating teachers and the incoming, group of teacher interns, and (c) conducting personal interviews with teacher interns and prospective cooperating teachers to gather data for the placement.

2. Teacher education faculty should ensure that all members of the triad, intern teacher, cooperating teacher and university supervisor, have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and of each other in their respective roles and of the program requirements. To that end there need to be: (a) a comprehensive and unambiguous handbook published, distributed and explained by the teacher education department, (b) seminars for cooperating teachers and university supervisors to clarify for them goals, roles, and responsibilities and means to learn and practice observation, supervision, collaboration and coaching skills, (c) frequent opportunities for cooperating teachers, teacher interns and university supervisors to discuss and exchange ideas about effective instructional skills so that they view the teaching act in a more congruent manner, and (d) inclusion of part-time university supervisors in meetings with full-time faculty to encourage a higher degree of commitment to the achievement of university program expectancies and intern success.

3. The faculty of teacher education departments may explore differentiated lengths of intern assignments. Some interns may need more and varied opportunities to bond with children before executing a well-planned lesson. Others may need less time to bond but more guidance in planning and implementation of lessons. Still others may need a longer period of time to form a comfortable relationship with their cooperating teachers. This opportunity for an expanded experience might have alleviated Sharon's feelings of being overwhelmed and sense of betrayal. This extended experience might also give cooperating teachers assurance that they will have enough time to get to know the intern and begin to understand the variables that motivate her or him, as in Diana's case.

5. Whenever it is apparent that the intern is failing, after having the benefits of the above recommendations, the faculty should quickly and decisively make appropriate changes for the intern.

Note. Pseudonyms were used for the three teacher interns.

References

Directors and Representatives of Teacher Education Programs (DARTEP) (April, 7, 1995). (Minutes from bimonthly meeting in East Lansing, MI.)

Fuller, F. F., & Bown, O. H. (1975). Becoming a teacher. In K. Ryan (Ed.), Teacher education. (Seventy-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Holmes Group (1986). Tomorrow's teachers: A report of the Holmes Group. Holmes Group, East Lansing, MI.

Iannaccone, L. (1963). Student teaching: A transition stage in the making of a teacher. Theory Into Practice, 2, 73-80.

Knowles, J. G., & Hoefler, V. B. (1989). The student teacher who wouldn't go away: Learning from failure. The Journal of Experiential Education, 12(2), 14-21.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Merriam, S. B. (1988). Case study research in education: A qualitative approach. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mayo, N., & Padron, Y. N. (1993, February). Examining preservice and inservice teachers' perceptions of the student teaching experiences. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators, Los Angeles, CA.

McNergney, R., & Satterstrom, L. (1984). Teacher characteristics and teacher performance. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 9(X), 19-24.

Olszewski, W., Hoffbauer, D., & Borchardt, E. (1991, October). Attention to climate: A case study of two decades of personalized and field-based teacher preparation. Paper presented at the thirteenth annual meeting of the Mid-Western Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.

Pigge, F. L., & Marso, R. N. (1989, March). Preservice training on Prospective teachers. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Pipher, M. (1994). Reviving Ophelia: Saving the selves of adolescent girls. New York: Grosset/Putman.

Rickman, L. W., & Hollowell, J. (1981). Some causes of student teacher failure. Improving College and University Teaching, 29(4), 176-178.

Ronk, J. L., & Schwille, S. A. (February, 1993). Profiling the successful and unsuccessful student teacher: The dilemma of the failing student. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators, Los Angeles, CA.

Ryan, K. (1986). The induction of new teachers. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Schumacher, S., & McMillian, J.H. (1993). Research in education: A conceptual introduction. New York: Harper Collins College Publishers.

Smith, D. J., & Sanche, R. P. (1993). Interns' personally expressed concerns: A need to extend the Fuller Model? Action in Teacher Education, 15(1), 36-41.

Stake, R. E. (1978). The case study method in social inquiry. Educational Researcher, 7(2), 5-8.

Appendix A

Interview Questions for Teacher Interns

BACKGROUND AND WARMUP

Currently, what are you doing professionally?

(If teaching, are you presently teaching the grade level in which you interned?)

(If teaching, are you using any of the instructional skills or ideas that you learned in your internship?)

Talk a little bit about this--why or why not?

If not teaching, what are you doing to pursue a teaching position?

If not teaching, is there anything anyone in the department to do to help you?

(If not currently teaching, have you had an opportunity to use any of the instructional skills or ideas that you learned in your internship?)

FIRST INTERNSHIP-REFLECTION

During the past year or so, have you reflected on your internship?

What kind of things stand out for you?

Take a minute and focus in on your first internship?

FIRST INTERNSHIP-CONTEXT

Just kind of talk about the sequence of events in that first internship...

description of placement, class, coop. teacher, assignments, school setting, community, etc.

describe support from peers, coop. teacher, principal, unv. supervisor, or other staff

What was your perception of your progress during the first several weeks?

FIRST INTERNSHIP-PROCESS AND PROBLEMS

What was your perception of your progress later?

When and how did you come to know that you were experiencing some difficulty?

-Who told you?
-How were you told?
-What was your reaction?
-What did you do?

What, if any, options were offered (a) at that time, (b) later, (c) by whom in either case?

Which alternatives did you choose and why?

FIRST INTERNSHIP-SUPPORT

Talk about the thoughts, feelings and actions that helped to sustain you between the ending of your first internship and the beginning of your second internship?

From whom did you get support during this interim peers, family members, coop. teacher, principal, unv. supervisor, or other staff

Now, take a few minutes to focus on your second internship?

What were you feeling on that first day?

SECOND INTERNSHIP-CONTEXT

Describe the placement, class, coop. teacher, assignments, school setting, community, etc.

What, if any, differences were there between the first placement and the second placement?

SECOND INTERNSHIP-PROCESS AND PROGRESS

Now, talk about the sequence of events in that second internship...

Describe support from peers, coop. teacher, principal, unv. supervisor, or other staff

What was your perception of your progress during the first several weeks in that second internship?

What was your perception of your progress later?

When and how did you come to know that you were experiencing some success?

-Who told you?
-How were you told?
-What was your reaction?
-What did you do?

How would you compare the support and communication in the first and second internship?

After reflecting on the entire internship experience, what factors do you believe were the most critical in helping you succeed?

Is there anything else that you would like to add before we finish?

THANK YOU !!!